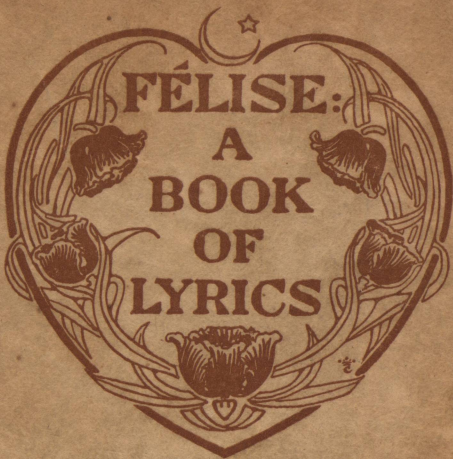
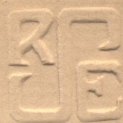


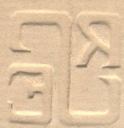


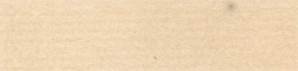
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FÉLISE
A BOOK OF LYRICS



FÉLISE:
A BOOK OF LYRICS
CHOSEN FROM ALGERNON
CHARLES SWINBURNE



Portland, Maine
THOMAS B. MOSHER
Mdccccix

A BOOK OF LYRICS CHOSEN FROM ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

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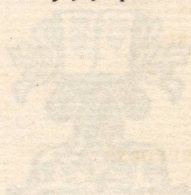
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Portland, Maine
 THOMAS A. MOSHER
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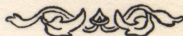
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FÉLISE
A BOOK OF LYRICS



*Song, have thy day and take thy fill of light
Before the night be fallen across thy way;
Sing while he may, man hath no long delight.*

DEDICATION

1865

THE sea gives her shells to the shingle,
The earth gives her streams to the sea ;
They are many, but my gift is single,
My verses, the firstfruits of me.
Let the wind take the green and the grey leaf,
Cast forth without fruit upon air ;
Take rose-leaf and vine-leaf and bay-leaf
Blown loose from the hair.

The night shakes them round me in legions,
Dawn drives them before her like dreams ;
Time sheds them like snows on strange regions,
Swept shoreward on infinite streams ;
Leaves pallid and sombre and ruddy,
Dead fruits of the fugitive years ;
Some stained as with wine and made bloody,
And some as with tears.

Some scattered in seven years' traces,
As they fell from the boy that was then ;
Long left among idle green places,
Or gathered but now among men ;
On seas full of wonder and peril,
Blown white round the capes of the north ;
Or in islands where myrtles are sterile
And loves bring not forth.

O daughters of dreams and of stories
That life is not wearied of yet,
Faustine, Fragoletta, Dolores,
Félice and Yolande and Juliette,
Shall I find you not still, shall I miss you,
When sleep, that is true or that seems,
Comes back to me hopeless to kiss you,
O daughters of dreams?

They are past as a slumber that passes,
As the dew of a dawn of old time;
More frail than the shadows on glasses,
More fleet than a wave or a rhyme.
As the waves after ebb drawing seaward,
When their hollows are full of the night,
So the birds that flew singing to me-ward
Recede out of sight.

The songs of dead seasons, that wander
On wings of articulate words;
Lost leaves that the shore-wind may squander,
Light flocks of untameable birds;
Some sang to me dreaming in class-time
And truant in hand as in tongue;
For the youngest were born of boy's pastime,
The eldest are young.

Is there shelter while life in them lingers,
Is there hearing for songs that recede,
Tunes touched from a harp with man's fingers
Or blown with boy's mouth in a reed?

Is there place in the land of your labour,
Is there room in your world of delight,
Where change has not sorrow for neighbour
And day has not night?

In their wings though the sea-wind yet quivers,
Will you spare not a space for them there
Made green with the running of rivers
And gracious with temperate air;
In the fields and the turreted cities,
That cover from sunshine and rain
Fair passions and bountiful pities
And loves without stain?

In a land of clear colours and stories,
In a region of shadowless hours,
Where earth has a garment of glories
And a murmur of musical flowers;
In woods where the spring half uncovers
The flush of her amorous face,
By the waters that listen for lovers,
For these is there place?

For the song-birds of sorrow, that muffle
Their music as clouds do their fire:
For the storm-birds of passion, that ruffle
Wild wings in a wind of desire;
In the stream of the storm as it settles
Blown seaward, borne far from the sun,
Shaken loose on the darkness like petals
Dropt one after one?

Though the world of your hands be more gracious
And lovelier in lordship of things
Clothed round by sweet art with the spacious
Warm heaven of her imminent wings,
Let them enter, unfledged and nigh fainting,
For the love of old loves and lost times ;
And receive in your palace of painting
This revel of rhymes.

Though the seasons of man full of losses
Make empty the years full of youth,
If but one thing be constant in crosses,
Change lays not her hand upon truth ;
Hopes die, and their tombs are for token
That the grief as the joy of them ends
Ere time that breaks all men has broken
The faith between friends.

Though the many lights dwindle to one light,
There is help if the heaven has one ;
Though the skies be discrowned of the sunlight
And the earth dispossessed of the sun,
They have moonlight and sleep for repayment,
When, refreshed as a bride and set free,
With stars and sea-winds in her raiment,
Night sinks on the sea.

FÉLISE

Mais où sont les neiges d'antan ?

WHAT shall be said between us here
Among the downs, between the trees,
In fields that knew our feet last year,
In sight of quiet sands and seas,
This year, Félice ?

Who knows what word were best to say ?
For last year's leaves lie dead and red
On this sweet day, in this green May,
And barren corn makes bitter bread.
What shall be said ?

Here as last year the fields begin,
A fire of flowers and glowing grass ;
The old fields we laughed and lingered in,
Seeing each our souls in last year's glass,
Félice, alas !

Shall we not laugh, shall we not weep,
Not we, though this be as it is ?
For love awake or love asleep
Ends in a laugh, a dream, a kiss,
A song like this.

I that have slept awake, and you
Sleep, who last year were well awake.
Though love do all that love can do,
My heart will never ache or break
For your heart's sake.

The great sea, faultless as a flower,
Throbs, trembling under beam and breeze,
And laughs with love of the amorous hour.
I found you fairer once, Félise,
Than flowers or seas.

We played at bondsman and at queen,
But as the days change men change too ;
I find the grey sea's notes of green,
The green sea's fervent flakes of blue,
More fair than you.

Your beauty is not over fair
Now in mine eyes, who am grown up wise.
The smell of flowers in all your hair
Allures not now ; no sigh replies
If your heart sighs.

But you sigh seldom, you sleep sound,
You find love's new name good enough.
Less sweet I find it than I found
The sweetest name that ever love
Grew weary of.

My snake with bright bland eyes, my snake
Grown tame and glad to be caressed,
With lips athirst for mine to slake
Their tender fever ! who had guessed
You loved me best ?

I had died for this last year, to know
You loved me. Who shall turn on fate ?

I care not if love come or go
Now, though your love seek mine for mate,
It is too late.

The dust of many strange desires
Lies deep between us; in our eyes
Dead smoke of perishable fires
Flickers, a fume in air and skies,
A steam of sighs.

You loved me and you loved me not;
A little, much, and overmuch.
Will you forget as I forgot?
Let all dead things lie dead; none such
Are soft to touch.

I love you and I do not love,
Too much, a little, not at all;
Too much, and never yet enough.
Birds quick to fledge and fly at call
Are quick to fall.

And these love longer now than men,
And larger loves than ours are these.
No diver brings up love again
Dropped once, my beautiful Félice,
In such cold seas.

Gone deeper than all plummets sound,
Where in the dim green dayless day
The life of such dead things lies bound
As the sea feeds on, wreck and stray
And castaway.

Can I forget? yea, that can I,
And that can all men; so will you,
Alive, or later, when you die.
Ah, but the love you plead was true?
Was mine not too?

I loved you for that name of yours
Long ere we met, and long enough.
Now that one thing of all endures —
The sweetest name that ever love
Waxed weary of.

Like colours in the sea, like flowers,
Like a cat's splendid circled eyes
That wax and wane with love for hours,
Green as green flame, blue-grey like skies,
And soft like sighs —

And all these only like your name,
And your name full of all of these.
I say it, and it sounds the same —
Save that I say it now at ease,
Your name, Félise.

I said "she must be swift and white,
And subtly warm, and half perverse,
And sweet like sharp soft fruit to bite,
And like a snake's love lithe and fierce."
Men have guessed worse.

What was the song I made of you
Here where the grass forgets our feet

As afternoon forgets the dew?
Ah that such sweet things should be fleet,
Such fleet things sweet!

As afternoon forgets the dew,
As time in time forgets all men,
As our old place forgets us two,
Who might have turned to one thing then,
But not again.

O lips that mine have grown into
Like April's kissing May,
O fervent eyelids letting through
Those eyes the greenest of things blue,
The bluest of things grey,

If you were I and I were you,
How could I love you, say?
How could the roseleaf love the rue,
The day love nightfall and her dew,
Though night may love the day?

You loved it may be more than I;
We know not; love is hard to seize,
And all things are not good to try;
And lifelong loves the worst of these
For us, Félise.

Ah, take the season and have done,
Love well the hour and let it go:
Two souls may sleep and wake up one,
Or dream they wake and find it so,
And then — you know.

Kiss me once hard as though a flame
Lay on my lips and made them fire;
The same lips now, and not the same;
What breath shall fill and re-inspire
A dead desire?

The old song sounds hollow in mine ear
Than thin keen sounds of dead men's speech —
A noise one hears and would not hear;
Too strong to die, too weak to reach
From wave to beach.

We stand on either side the sea,
Stretch hands, blow kisses, laugh and lean
I toward you, you toward me;
But what hears either save the keen
Grey sea between?

A year divides us, love from love,
Though you love now, though I loved then.
The gulf is strait, but deep enough;
Who shall recross, who among men
Shall cross again?

Love was a jest last year, you said,
And what lives surely, surely dies.
Even so; but now that love is dead,
Shall love rekindle from wet eyes,
From subtle sighs?

For many loves are good to see;
Mutable loves, and loves perverse;

But there is nothing, nor shall be,
So sweet, so wicked, but my verse
Can dream of worse.

For we that sing and you that love
Know that which man may, only we.
The rest live under us ; above,
Live the great gods in heaven, and see
What things shall be.

So this thing is and must be so ;
For man dies, and love also dies.
Though yet love's ghost moves to and fro
The sea-green mirrors of your eyes,
And laughs, and lies.

Eyes coloured like a water-flower,
And deeper than the green sea's glass ;
Eyes that remember one sweet hour —
In vain we swore it should not pass ;
In vain, alas !

Ah my Félise, if love or sin,
If shame or fear could hold it fast,
Should we not hold it ? Love wears thin,
And they laugh well who laugh the last.
Is it not past ?

The gods, the gods are stronger ; time
Falls down before them, all men's knees
Bow, all men's prayers and sorrows climb
Like incense towards them ; yea, for these
Are gods, Félise.

Immortal are they, clothed with powers,
Not to be comforted at all ;
Lords over all the fruitless hours ;
Too great to appease, too high to appal,
Too far to call.

For none shall move the most high gods,
Who are most sad, being cruel ; none
Shall break or take away the rods
Wherewith they scourge us, not as one
That smites a son.

By many a name of many a creed
We have called upon them, since the sands
Fell through time's hour-glass first, a seed
Of life ; and out of many lands
Have we stretched hands.

When have they heard us ? who hath known
Their faces, climbed unto their feet,
Felt them and found them ? Laugh or groan,
Doth heaven remurmur and repeat
Sad sounds or sweet ?

Do the stars answer ? in the night
Have ye found comfort ? or by day
Have ye seen gods ? What hope, what light,
Falls from the farthest starriest way
On you that pray ?

Are the skies wet because we weep,
Or fair because of any mirth ?

Cry out; they are gods; perchance they sleep;
Cry; thou shalt know what prayers are worth,
Thou dust and earth.

O earth, thou art fair; O dust, thou art great;
O laughing lips and lips that mourn,
Pray, till ye feel the exceeding weight
Of God's intolerable scorn,
Not to be borne.

Behold, there is no grief like this;
The barren blossom of thy prayer,
Thou shalt find out how sweet it is.
O fools and blind, what seek ye there,
High up in the air?

Ye must have gods, the friends of men,
Merciful gods, compassionate,
And these shall answer you again.
Will ye beat always at the gate,
Ye fools of fate?

Ye fools and blind; for this is sure,
That all ye shall not live, but die.
Lo, what thing have ye found endure?
Or what thing have ye found on high
Past the blind sky?

The ghosts of words and dusty dreams,
Old memories, faiths infirm and dead.
Ye fools; for which among you deems
His prayer can alter green to red
Or stones to bread?

Why should ye bear with hopes and fears
Till all these things be drawn in one,
The sound of iron-footed years,
And all the oppression that is done
Under the sun?

Ye might end surely, surely pass
Out of the multitude of things,
Under the dust, beneath the grass,
Deep in dim death, where no thought stings,
No record clings.

No memory more of love or hate,
No trouble, nothing that aspires,
No sleepless labour thwarting fate,
And thwarted; where no travail tires,
Where no faith fires.

All passes, nought that has been is,
Things good and evil have one end.
Can anything be otherwise
Though all men swear all things would mend
With God to friend?

Can ye beat off one wave with prayer,
Can ye move mountains? bid the flower
Take flight and turn to a bird in the air?
Can ye hold fast for shine or shower
One wingless hour?

Ah sweet, and we too, can we bring
One sigh back, bid one smile revive?

Can God restore one ruined thing,
Or he who slays our souls alive
Make dead things thrive ?

Two gifts perforce he has given us yet,
Though sad things stay and glad things fly ;
Two gifts he has given us, to forget
All glad and sad things that go by,
And then to die.

We know not whether death be good,
But life at least it will not be :
Men will stand saddening as we stood,
Watch the same fields and skies as we
And the same sea.

Let this be said between us here,
One love grows green when one turns grey ;
This year knows nothing of last year ;
To-morrow has no more to say
To yesterday.

Live and let live, as I will do,
Love and let love, and so will I.
But, sweet, for me no more with you :
Not while I live, not though I die.
Good-night, good-bye.

A LEAVE-TAKING

LET us go hence, my songs ; she will not hear.
Let us go hence together without fear ;
Keep silence now, for singing-time is over,
And over all old things and all things dear.
She loves not you nor me as all we love her.
Yea, though we sang as angels in her ear,
She would not hear.

Let us rise up and part ; she will not know.
Let us go seaward as the great winds go,
Full of blown sand and foam ; what help is there ?
There is no help, for all these things are so,
And all the world is bitter as a tear.
And how these things are, though ye strove to show
She would not know.

Let us go home and hence ; she will not weep.
We gave love many dreams and days to keep,
Flowers without scent, and fruits that would not grow,
Saying, " If thou wilt, thrust in thy sickle and reap."'
All is reaped now ; no grass is left to mow ;
And we that sowed, though all we fell on sleep,
She would not weep.

Let us go hence and rest ; she will not love.
She shall not hear us if we sing hereof,
Nor see love's ways, how sore they are and steep.
Come hence, let be, lie still ; it is enough.

Love is a barren sea, bitter and deep ;
And though she saw all heaven in flower above,
She would not love.

Let us give up, go down ; she will not care.
Though all the stars made gold of all the air,
And the sea moving saw before it move
One moon-flower making all the foam-flowers fair ;
Though all those waves went over us, and drove
Deep down the stifling lips and drowning hair
She would not care.

Let us go hence, go hence ; she will not see.
Sing all once more together ; surely she,
She too, remembering days and words that were,
Will turn a little toward us, sighing ; but we,
We are hence, we are gone, as though we had not been there.
Nay, and though all men seeing had pity on me,
She would not see.

ITYLUS

SWALLOW, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring?
A thousand summers are over and dead.
What hast thou found in the spring to follow?
What hast thou found in thine heart to sing?
What wilt thou do when the summer is shed?

O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the south,
The soft south whither thine heart is set?
Shall not the grief of the old time follow?
Shall not the song thereof cleave to thy mouth?
Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,
Thy way is long to the sun and the south;
But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,
Shedding my song upon height, upon hollow,
From tawny body and sweet small mouth
Feed the heart of the night with fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,
O swallow, sister, O changing swallow,
All spring through till the spring be done,
Clothed with the light of the night on the dew,
Sing, while the hours and the wild birds follow,
Take flight and follow and find the sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft light swallow,
Though all things feast in the spring's guest-chamber,
How hast thou heart to be glad thereof yet?
For where thou fliest I shall not follow,
Till life forget and death remember,
Till thou remember and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,
I know not how thou hast heart to sing.
Hast thou the heart? is it all past over?
Thy lord the summer is good to follow,
And fair the feet of thy lover the spring:
But what wilt thou say to the spring thy lover?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,
My heart in me is a molten ember
And over my head the waves have met.
But thou wouldst tarry or I would follow,
Could I forget or thou remember,
Couldst thou remember and I forget.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,
The heart's division divideth us.
Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;
But mine goes forth among sea-gulfs hollow
To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,
I pray thee sing not a little space.
Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?

The woven web that was plain to follow,
The small slain body, the flower-like face,
Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!
The hands that cling and the feet that follow,
The voice of the child's blood crying yet
Who hath remembered me? who hath forgotten?
Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,
But the world shall end when I forget.

A LAMENTATION

I

WHO hath known the ways of time
Or trodden behind his feet ?

There is no such man among men.

For chance overcomes him, or crime

Changes ; for all things sweet

In time wax bitter again.

Who shall give sorrow enough,

Or who the abundance of tears ?

Mine eyes are heavy with love

And a sword gone through mine ears,

A sound like a sword and fire,

For pity, for great desire ;

Who shall ensure me thereof,

Lest I die, being full of my fears ?

Who hath known the ways and the wrath,

The sleepless spirit, the root

And blossom of evil will,

The divine device of a god ?

Who shall behold it or hath ?

The twice-tongued prophets are mute,

The many speakers are still ;

No foot has travelled or trod,

No hand has meted, his path.

Man's fate is a blood-red fruit,

And the mighty gods have their fill

And relax not the rein, or the rod.

Ye were mighty in heart from of old,
Ye slew with the spear, and are slain.
Keen after heat is the cold,
Sore after summer is rain,
And melteth man to the bone.
As water he weareth away,
As a flower, as an hour in a day,
Fallen from laughter to moan.
But my spirit is shaken with fear
Lest an evil thing begin,
New-born, a spear for a spear,
And one for another sin.
Or ever our tears began,
It was known from of old and said;
One law for a living man,
And another law for the dead.
For these are fearful and sad,
Vain, and things without breath;
While he lives let a man be glad,
For none hath joy of his death.

II

Who hath known the pain, the old pain of earth,
Or all the travail of the sea,
The many ways and waves, the birth
Fruitless, the labour nothing worth?
Who hath known, who knoweth, O gods? not we.
There is none shall say he hath seen,
There is none he hath known.
Though he saith, Lo, a lord have I been,
I have reaped and sown;

I have seen the desire of mine eyes,
The beginning of love,
The season of kisses and sighs
And the end thereof.
I have known the ways of the sea,
All the perilous ways;
Strange winds have spoken with me,
And the tongues of strange days.
I have hewn the pine for ships;
Where steeds run arow,
I have seen from their bridled lips
Foam blown as the snow.
With snapping of chariot-poles
And with straining of oars
I have grazed in the race the goals,
In the storm the shores;
As a greave is cleft with an arrow
At the joint of the knee,
I have cleft through the sea-straits narrow
To the heart of the sea.
When air was smitten in sunder
I have watched on high
The ways of the stars and the thunder
In the night of the sky;
Where the dark brings forth light as a flower,
As from lips that dissever;
One abideth the space of an hour,
One endureth for ever.
Lo, what hath he seen or known
Of the way and the wave
Unbeholden, unsailed-on, unsown,
From the breast to the grave?

Or ever the stars were made, or skies,
Grief was born, and the kinless night,
Mother of gods without form or name.
And light is born out of heaven and dies,
And one day knows not another's light,
But night is one, and her shape the same.
But dumb the goddesses underground
Wait, and we hear not on earth if their feet
Rise, and the night wax loud with their wings;
Dumb, without word or shadow of sound;
And sift in scales and winnow as wheat
Men's souls, and sorrow of manifold things.

III

Nor less of grief than ours
The gods wrought long ago
To bruise men one by one;
But with the incessant hours
Fresh grief and greener woe
Spring, as the sudden sun
Year after year makes flowers;
And these die down and grow,
And the next year lacks none.

As these men sleep, have slept
The old heroes in time fled,
No dream-divided sleep;
And holier eyes have wept
Than ours, when on her dead
Gods have seen Thetis weep,

With heavenly hair far-swept
Back, heavenly hands outspread
Round what she could not keep,

Could not one day withhold,
One night; and like as these
White ashes of no weight,
Held not his urn the cold
Ashes of Heracles?

For all things born one gate
Opens, no gate of gold;
Opens; and no man sees
Beyond the gods and fate.

IN THE ORCHARD

(PROVENÇAL BURDEN)

LEAVE go my hands, let me catch breath and see;
Let the dew-fall drench either side of me;
Clear apple-leaves are soft upon that moon
Seen sidelong like a blossom in the tree;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

The grass is thick and cool, it lets us lie.
Kissed upon either cheek and either eye,
I turn to thee as some green afternoon
Turns toward sunset, and is loth to die;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Lie closer, lean your face upon my side,
Feel where the dew fell that has hardly dried,
Hear how the blood beats that went nigh to swoon;
The pleasure lives there when the sense has died;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

O my fair lord, I charge you leave me this :
Is it not sweeter than a foolish kiss ?
Nay take it then, my flower, my first in June,
My rose, so like a tender mouth it is :
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Love, till dawn sunder night from day with fire,
Dividing my delight and my desire,
The crescent life and love the plenilune,
Love me though dusk begin and dark retire;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Ah, my heart fails, my blood draws back ; I know,
When life runs over, life is near to go ;

And with the slain of love love's ways are strewn,
And with their blood, if love will have it so ;

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Ah, do thy will now ; slay me if thou wilt ;

There is no building now the walls are built,

No quarrying now the corner-stone is hewn,

No drinking now the vine's whole blood is spilt ;

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Nay, slay me now ; nay, for I will be slain ;

Pluck thy red pleasure from the teeth of pain,

Break down thy vine ere yet grape-gatherers prune,
Slay me ere day can slay desire again ;

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Yea, with thy sweet lips, with thy sweet sword ; yea

Take life and all, for I will die, I say ;

Love, I gave love, is life a better boon ?

For sweet night's sake I will not live till day ;

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Nay, I will sleep then only ; nay, but go.

Ah sweet, too sweet to me, my sweet, I know

Love, sleep, and death go to the sweet same tune ;

Hold my hair fast, and kiss me through it so.

Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

A MATCH

IF love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together
In sad or singing weather,
Blown fields or flowerful closes,
Green pleasure or grey grief;
If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune,
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
That gets sweet rain at noon;
If I were what the words are
And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death,
We'd shine and snow together
Ere March made sweet the weather
With daffodil and starling
And hours of fruitful breath;
If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy,

We'd play for lives and seasons
With loving looks and treasons
And tears of night and morrow
And laughs of maid and boy;
If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May,
We'd throw with leaves for hours
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day like night were shady
And night were bright like day;
If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May.

If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain,
We'd hunt down love together,
Pluck out his flying-feather,
And teach his feet a measure,
And find his mouth a rein;
If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain.

ROCOCO

TAKE hands and part with laughter;
Touch lips and part with tears;
Once more and no more after,
Whatever comes with years.
We twain shall not remeasure
The ways that left us twain;
Nor crush the lees of pleasure
From sanguine grapes of pain.

We twain once well in sunder,
What will the mad gods do
For hate with me, I wonder,
Or what for love with you?
Forget them till November,
And dream there's April yet
Forget that I remember,
And dream that I forget.

Time found our tired love sleeping,
And kissed away his breath;
But what should we do weeping,
Though light love sleep to death?
We have drained his lips at leisure,
Till there's not left to drain
A single sob of pleasure,
A single pulse of pain.

Dream that the lips once breathless
Might quicken if they would;

Say that the soul is deathless ;
 Dream that the gods are good ;
Say March may wed September,
 And time divorce regret ;
But not that you remember,
 And not that I forget.

We have heard from hidden places
 What love scarce lives and hears :
We have seen on fervent faces
 The pallor of strange tears :
We have trod the wine-vat's treasure,
 Whence, ripe to steam and stain,
Foams round the feet of pleasure
 The blood-red must of pain.

Remembrance may recover
 And time bring back to time
The name of your first lover,
 The ring of my first rhyme ;
But rose-leaves of December
 The frosts of June shall fret,
The day that you remember,
 The day that I forget.

The snake that hides and hisses
 In heaven we twain have known ;
The grief of cruel kisses,
 The joy whose mouth makes moan ;
The pulse's pause and measure,
 Where in one furtive vein
Throbs through the heart of pleasure
 The purpler blood of pain.

We have done with tears and treasons
And love for treason's sake ;
Room for the swift new seasons,
The years that burn and break,
Dismantle and dismember
Men's days and dreams, Juliette;
For love may not remember,
But time will not forget.

Life treads down love in flying,
Time withers him at root ;
Bring all dead things and dying,
Reaped sheaf and ruined fruit,
Where, crushed by three days' pressure
Our three days' love lies slain ;
And earlier leaf of pleasure,
And latter flower of pain.

Breathe close upon the ashes,
It may be flame will leap ;
Unclose the soft close lashes,
Lift up the lids, and weep.
Light love's extinguished ember,
Let one tear leave it wet
For one that you remember
And ten that you forget.

RONDEL

THESE many years since we began to be,
What have the gods done with us? what with me,
What with my love? they have shown me fates and fears,
Harsh springs, and fountains bitterer than the sea,
Grief a fixed star, and joy a vane that veers,
These many years.

With her, my love, with her have they done well?
But who shall answer for her? who shall tell
Sweet things or sad, such things as no man hears?
May no tears fall, if no tears ever fell,
From eyes more dear to me than starriest spheres
These many years!

But if tears ever touched, for any grief,
Those eyelids folded like a white-rose leaf,
Deep double shells wherethrough the eye-flower peers,
Let them weep once more only, sweet and brief,
Brief tears and bright, for one who gave her tears
These many years.

A BALLAD OF BURDENS

THE burden of fair women. Vain delight,
And love self-slain in some sweet shameful way,
And sorrowful old age that comes by night
As a thief comes that has no heart by day,
And change that finds fair cheeks and leaves them grey,
And weariness that keeps awake for hire,
And grief that says what pleasure used to say;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bought kisses. This is sore,
A burden without fruit in childbearing;
Between the nightfall and the dawn threescore,
Threescore between the dawn and evening.
The shuddering in thy lips, the shuddering
In thy sad eyelids tremulous like fire,
Makes love seem shameful and a wretched thing.
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sweet speeches. Nay, kneel down,
Cover thy head, and weep; for verily
These market-men that buy thy white and brown
In the last days shall take no thought for thee.
In the last days like earth thy face shall be,
Yea, like sea-marsh made thick with brine and mire,
Sad with sick leavings of the sterile sea.
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of long living. Thou shalt fear
Waking, and sleeping mourn upon thy bed;

And say at night "Would God the day were here,"
And say at dawn "Would God the day were dead."
With weary days thou shalt be clothed and fed,
And wear remorse of heart for thine attire,
Pain for thy girdle and sorrow upon thine head ;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bright colours. Thou shalt see
Gold tarnished, and the grey above the green ;
And as the thing thou seest thy face shall be,
And no more as the thing beforetime seen.
And thou shalt say of mercy "It hath been,"
And living, watch the old lips and loves expire,
And talking, tears shall take thy breath between.
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sad sayings. In that day
Thou shalt tell all thy days and hours, and tell
Thy times and ways and words of love, and say
How one was dear and one desirable,
And sweet was life to hear and sweet to smell,
But now with lights reverse the old hours retire
And the last hour is shod with fire from hell.
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of four seasons. Rain in spring,
White rain and wind among the tender trees ;
A summer of green sorrows gathering,
Rank autumn in a mist of miseries,
With sad face set towards the year, that sees
The charred ash drop out of the dropping pyre,
And winter wan with many maladies ;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of dead faces. Out of sight
And out of love, beyond the reach of hands,
Changed in the changing of the dark and light,
They walk and weep about the barren lands
Where no seed is nor any garner stands,
Where in short breaths the doubtful days respire,
And time's turned glass lets through the sighing sands;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of much gladness. Life and lust
Forsake thee, and the face of thy delight;
And underfoot the heavy hour strews dust,
And overhead strange weathers burn and bite;
And where the red was, lo the bloodless white,
And where truth was, the likeness of a liar,
And where day was, the likeness of the night;
This is the end of every man's desire.

L'ENVOY

Princes, and ye whom pleasure quickeneth,
Heed well this rhyme before your pleasure tire;
For life is sweet, but after life is death.
This is the end of every man's desire.

STAGE LOVE

WHEN the game began between them for a jest
He played king and she played queen to match
the best ;

Laughter soft as tears, and tears that turned to laughter,
These were things she sought for years and sorrowed
after.

Pleasure with dry lips, and pain that walks by night ;
All the sting and all the stain of long delight ;
These were things she knew not of, that knew not of her,
When she played at half a love with half a lover.

Time was chorus, gave them cues to laugh or cry ;
They would kill, befool, amuse him, let him die ;
Set him webs to weave to-day and break to-morrow,
Till he died for good in play, and rose in sorrow.

What the years mean ; how time dies and is not slain ;
How love grows and laughs and cries and wanes again ;
These were things she came to know, and take their
measure,

When the play was played out so for one man's pleasure.

EROTION

SWEET for a little even to fear, and sweet,
O love, to lay down fear at love's fair feet;
Shall not some fiery memory of his breath
Lie sweet on lips that touch the lips of death?
Yet leave me not; yet, if thou wilt, be free;
Love me no more, but love my love of thee.
Love where thou wilt, and live thy life; and I,
One thing I can, and one love cannot — die.
Pass from me; yet thine arms, thine eyes, thine hair,
Feed my desire and deaden my despair.
Yet once more ere time change us, ere my cheek
Whiten, ere hope be dumb or sorrow speak,
Yet once more ere thou hate me, one full kiss;
Keep other hours for others, save me this.
Yea, and I will not (if it please thee) weep,
Lest thou be sad; I will but sigh, and sleep.
Sweet, does death hurt? thou canst not do me wrong:
I shall not lack thee, as I loved thee, long.
Hast thou not given me above all that live
Joy, and a little sorrow shalt not give?
What even though fairer fingers of strange girls
Pass nestling through thy beautiful boy's curls
As mine did, or those curled lithe lips of thine
Meet theirs as these, all theirs come after mine;
And though I were not, though I be not, best,
I have loved and love thee more than all the rest.
O love, O lover, loose or hold me fast,
I had thee first, whoever have thee last;
Fairer or not, what need I know, what care?
To thy fair bud my blossom once seemed fair.

Why am I fair at all before thee, why
At all desired? seeing thou art fair, not I.
I shall be glad of thee, O fairest head,
Alive, alone, without thee, with thee, dead;
I shall remember while the light lives yet,
And in the night-time I shall not forget.
Though (as thou wilt) thou leave me ere life leave,
I will not, for thy love I will not, grieve;
Not as they use who love not more than I,
Who love not as I love thee though I die;
And though thy lips, once mine, be oftener prest
To many another brow and balmier breast,
And sweeter arms, or sweeter to thy mind,
Lull thee or lure, more fond thou wilt not find.

IN MEMORY OF WALTER SAVAGE
LANDOR

BACK to the flower-town, side by side,
The bright months bring,
New-born, the bridegroom and the bride,
Freedom and spring.

The sweet land laughs from sea to sea,
Filled full of sun ;
All things come back to her, being free ;
All things but one.

In many a tender wheaten plot
Flowers that were dead
Live, and old suns revive ; but not
That holier head.

By this white wandering waste of sea,
Far north, I hear
One face shall never turn to me
As once this year :

Shall never smile and turn and rest
On mine as there,
Nor one most sacred hand be prest
Upon my hair.

I came as one whose thoughts half linger,
Half run before ;
The youngest to the oldest singer
That England bore.

I found him whom I shall not find
Till all grief end,
In holiest age our mightiest mind,
Father and friend.

But thou, if anything endure,
If hope there be,
O spirit that man's life left pure,
Man's death set free,

Not with disdain of days that were
Look earthward now ;
Let dreams revive the reverend hair,
The imperial brow ;

Come back in sleep, for in the life
Where thou art not
We find none like thee. Time and strife
And the world's lot

Move thee no more ; but love at least
And reverent heart
May move thee, royal and released,
Soul, as thou art.

And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
Receive and keep,
Keep safe his dedicated dust,
His sacred sleep.

So shall thy lovers, come from far,
Mix with thy name
As morning-star with evening-star
His faultless fame.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE

HERE, where the world is quiet,
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams ;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap :
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers
And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbour
And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labour,
Weak ships and spirits steer ;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither ;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,

But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes
Where no leaf blooms or blushes
Save this whereout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born ;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn ;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings ;
And all dead years draw thither,
And all disastrous things ;
Dead dreams of days forsaken
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure ;
To-day will die to-morrow ;
Time stoops to no man's lure ;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be

That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

FRAGOLETTA

O LOVE! what shall be said of thee?
The son of grief begot by joy?
Being sightless, wilt thou see?
Being sexless, wilt thou be
Maiden or boy?

I dreamed of strange lips yesterday
And cheeks wherein the ambiguous blood
Was like a rose's — yea,
A rose's when it lay
Within the bud.

What fields have bred thee, or what groves
Concealed thee, O mysterious flower,
O double rose of Love's,
With leaves that lure the doves
From bud to bower?

I dare not kiss it, lest my lip
Press harder than an indrawn breath,
And all the sweet life slip
Forth, and the sweet leaves drip,
Bloodlike, in death.

O sole desire of my delight!
O sole delight of my desire!
Mine eyelids and eyesight
Feed on thee day and night
Like lips of fire.

Lean back thy throat of carven pearl,
Let thy mouth murmur like the dove's ;
Say, Venus hath no girl,
No front of female curl,
Among her Loves.

Thy sweet low bosom, thy close hair,
Thy strait soft flanks and slenderer feet,
Thy virginal strange air,
Are these not over fair
For Love to greet?

How should he greet thee? what new name,
Fit to move all men's hearts, could move
Thee, deaf to love or shame,
Love's sister, by the same
Mother as Love?

Ah sweet, the maiden's mouth is cold,
Her breast-blossoms are simply red,
Her hair mere brown or gold,
Fold over simple fold
Binding her head.

Thy mouth is made of fire and wine,
Thy barren bosom takes my kiss
And turns my soul to thine
And turns thy lip to mine,
And mine it is.

Thou hast a serpent in thine hair,
In all the curls that close and cling ;
And ah, thy breast-flower!

Ah love, thy mouth too fair
To kiss and sting!

Cleave to me, love me, kiss mine eyes.
Sate thy lips with loving me;
Nay, for thou shalt not rise;
Lie still as Love that dies
For love of thee.

Mine arms are close about thine head,
My lips are fervent on thy face,
And where my kiss hath fed
Thy flower-like blood leaps red
To the kissed place.

O bitterness of things too sweet
O broken singing of the dove!
Love's wings are over fleet,
And like the panther's feet
The feet of Love.

MADONNA MIA

UNDER green apple-boughs
That never a storm will rouse,
My lady hath her house
Between two bowers;
In either of the twain
Red roses full of rain;
She hath for bondwomen
All kind of flowers.

She hath no handmaid fair
To draw her curled gold hair
Through rings of gold that bear
Her whole hair's weight;
She hath no maids to stand
Gold-clothed on either hand;
In all the great green land
None is so great.

She hath no more to wear
But one white hood of vair
Drawn over eyes and hair,
Wrought with strange gold,
Made for some great queen's head,
Some fair great queen since dead;
And one strait gown of red
Against the cold.

Beneath her eyelids deep
Love lying seems asleep,

Love, swift to wake, to weep,
To laugh, to gaze;
Her breasts are like white birds,
And all her gracious words
As water-grass to herds
In the June-days.

To her all dews that fall
And rains are musical;
Her flowers are fed from all,
Her joy from these;
In the deep-feathered firs
Their gift of joy is hers,
In the least breath that stirs
Across the trees.

She grows with greenest leaves,
Ripens with reddest sheaves,
Forgets, remembers, grieves,
And is not sad;
The quiet lands and skies
Leave light upon her eyes;
None knows her, weak or wise,
Or tired or glad.

None knows, none understands,
What flowers are like her hands;
Though you should search all lands
Wherein time grows,
What snows are like her feet,
Though his eyes burn with heat
Through gazing on my sweet,
Yet no man knows.

Only this thing is said ;
That white and gold and red,
God's three chief words, man's bread
And oil and wine,
Were given her for dowers,
And kingdom of all hours,
And grace of goodly flowers
And various vine.

This is my lady's praise :
God after many days
Wrought her in unknown ways,
In sunset lands ;
This was my lady's birth ;
God gave her might and mirth
And laid his whole sweet earth
Between her hands.

Under deep apple-boughs
My lady hath her house ;
She wears upon her brows
The flower thereof ;
All saying but what God saith
To her is as vain breath ;
She is more strong than death,
Being strong as love.

BEFORE THE MIRROR

(VERSES WRITTEN UNDER A PICTURE)

INSCRIBED TO J. A. WHISTLER

I

WHITE rose in red rose-garden
Is not so white ;
Snowdrops that plead for pardon
And pine for fright
Because the hard East blows
Over their maiden rows
Grow not as this face grows from pale to bright.

Behind the veil, forbidden,
Shut up from sight,
Love, is there sorrow hidden,
Is there delight ?
Is joy thy dower or grief,
White rose of weary leaf,
Late rose whose life is brief, whose loves are light ?

Soft snows that hard winds harden
Till each flake bite
Fill all the flowerless garden
Whose flowers took flight
Long since when summer ceased,
And men rose up from feast,
And warm west wind grew east, and warm day night.

II

“Come snow, come wind or thunder
 High up in air,
 I watch my face, and wonder
 At my bright hair;
 Nought else exalts or grieves
 The rose at heart, that heaves
 With love of her own leaves and lips that pair.

“She knows not loves that kissed her
 She knows not where,
 Art thou the ghost, my sister,
 White sister there,
 Am I the ghost, who knows?
 My hand, a fallen rose,
 Lies snow-white on white snows, and takes no care.

“I cannot see what pleasures
 Or what pains were;
 What pale new loves and treasures
 New years will bear;
 What beam will fall, what shower,
 What grief or joy for dower;
 But one thing knows the flower; the flower is fair.”

III

Glad, but not flushed with gladness,
 Since joys go by;
 Sad, but not bent with sadness,
 Since sorrows die;

Deep in the gleaming glass
She sees all past things pass,
And all sweet life that was lie down and lie.

There glowing ghosts of flowers
Draw down, draw nigh;
And wings of swift spent hours
Take flight and fly;
She sees by formless gleams,
She hears across cold streams,
Dead mouths of many dreams that sing and sigh.

Face fallen and white throat lifted,
With sleepless eye
She sees old loves that drifted,
She knew not why,
Old loves and faded fears
Float down a stream that hears
The flowing of all men's tears beneath the sky.

THE TRIUMPH OF TIME

BEFORE our lives divide for ever,
While time is with us and hands are free,
(Time, swift to fasten and swift to sever
Hand from hand, as we stand by the sea)
I will say no word that a man might say
Whose whole life's love goes down in a day;
For this could never have been ; and never,
Though the gods and the years relent, shall be.

Is it worth a tear, is it worth an hour,
To think of things that are well outworn ?
Of fruitless husk and fugitive flower,
The dream foregone and the deed forborne ?
Though joy be done with and grief be vain,
Time shall not sever us wholly in twain ;
Earth is not spoilt for a single shower ;
But the rain has ruined the ungrown corn.

It will grow not again, this fruit of my heart,
Smitten with sunbeams, ruined with rain.
The singing seasons divide and depart,
Winter and summer depart in twain.
It will grow not again, it is ruined at root,
The bloodlike blossom, the dull red fruit ;
Though the heart yet sickens, the lips yet smart,
With sullen savour of poisonous pain.

I have given no man of my fruit to eat ;
I trod the grapes, I have drunken the wine.

Had you eaten and drunken and found it sweet,
This wild new growth of the corn and vine,
This wine and bread without lees or leaven,
We had grown as gods, as the gods in heaven,
Souls fair to look upon, goodly to greet,
One splendid spirit, your soul and mine.

In the change of years, in the coil of things,
In the clamour and rumour of life to be,
We, drinking love at the furthest springs,
Covered with love as a covering tree,
We had grown as gods, as the gods above,
Filled from the heart to the lips with love,
Held fast in his hands, clothed warm with his wings,
O love, my love, had you loved but me!

We had stood as the sure stars stand, and moved
As the moon moves, loving the world; and seen
Grief collapse as a thing disproved,
Death consume as a thing unclean.
Twain halves of a perfect heart, made fast
Soul to soul while the years fell past;
Had you loved me once, as you have not loved;
Had the chance been with us that has not been.

I have put my days and dreams out of mind,
Days that are over, dreams that are done.
Though we seek life through, we shall surely find
There is none of them clear to us now, not one.
But clear are these things; the grass and the sand,
Where, sure as the eyes reach, ever at hand,
With lips wide open and face burnt blind,
The strong sea-daisies feast on the sun.

The low downs lean to the sea ; the stream,
One loose thin pulseless tremulous vein,
Rapid and vivid and dumb as a dream,
Works downward, sick of the sun and the rain ;
No wind is rough with the rank rare flowers ;
The sweet sea, mother of loves and hours,
Shudders and shines as the grey winds gleam,
Turning her smile to a fugitive pain.

Mother of loves that are swift to fade,
Mother of mutable winds and hours.
A barren mother, a mother-maid,
Cold and clean as her faint salt flowers.
I would we twain were even as she,
Lost in the night and the light of the sea,
Where faint sounds falter and wan beams wade,
Break, and are broken, and shed into showers.

The loves and hours of the life of a man,
They are swift and sad, being born of the sea.
Hours that rejoice and regret for a span,
Born with a man's breath, mortal as he ;
Loves that are lost ere they come to birth,
Weeds of the wave, without fruit upon earth.
I lose what I long for, save what I can,
My love, my love, and no love for me !

It is not much that a man can save
On the sands of life, in the straits of time,
Who swims in sight of the great third wave
That never a swimmer shall cross or climb.

Some waif washed up with the strays and spars
That ebb-tide shows to the shore and the stars;
Weed from the water, grass from a grave,
A broken blossom, a ruined rhyme.

There will no man do for your sake, I think,
What I would have done for the least word said.
I had wrung life dry for your lips to drink,
Broken it up for your daily bread:
Body for body and blood for blood,
As the flow of the full sea risen to flood
That yearns and trembles before it sink,
I had given, and lain down for you, glad and dead.

Yea, hope at highest and all her fruit,
And time at fullest and all his dower,
I had given you surely, and life to boot,
Were we once made one for a single hour.
But now, you are twain, you are cloven apart,
Flesh of his flesh, but heart of my heart;
And deep in one is the bitter root,
And sweet for one is the lifelong flower.

To have died if you cared I should die for you, clung
To my life if you bade me, played my part
As it pleased you — these were the thoughts that stung,
The dreams that smote with a keener dart
Than shafts of love or arrows of death;
These were but as fire is, dust, or breath,
Or poisonous foam on the tender tongue
Of the little snakes that eat my heart.

I wish we were dead together to-day,
Lost sight of, hidden away out of sight,
Clasped and clothed in the cloven clay,
Out of the world's way, out of the light,
Out of the ages of worldly weather,
Forgotten of all men altogether,
As the world's first dead, taken wholly away,
Made one with death, filled full of the night.

How we should slumber, how we should sleep,
Far in the dark with the dreams and the dews!
And dreaming, grow to each other, and weep,
Laugh low, live softly, murmur and muse;
Yea, and it may be, struck through by the dream,
Feel the dust quicken and quiver, and seem
Alive as of old to the lips, and leap
Spirit to spirit as lovers use.

Sick dreams and sad of a dull delight;
For what shall it profit when men are dead
To have dreamed, to have loved with the whole soul's
might,
To have looked for day when the day was fled?
Let come what will, there is one thing worth,
To have had fair love in the life upon earth:
To have held love safe till the day grew night,
While skies had colour and lips were red.

Would I lose you now? would I take you then,
If I lose you now that my heart has need?
And come what may after death to men,
What thing worth this will the dead years breed?

Lose life, lose all; but at least I know,
O sweet life's love, having loved you so,
Had I reached you on earth, I should lose not again,
In death nor life, nor in dream or deed.

Yea, I know this well: were you once sealed mine,
Mine in the blood's beat, mine in the breath,
Mixed into me as honey in wine,
Not time that sayeth and gainsayeth,
Nor all strong things had severed us then;
Not wrath of gods, nor wisdom of men,
Nor all things earthly, nor all divine,
Nor joy nor sorrow, nor life nor death.

I had grown pure as the dawn and the dew,
You had grown strong as the sun or the sea.
But none shall triumph a whole life through:
For death is one, and the fates are three.
At the door of life, by the gate of breath,
There are worse things waiting for men than death;
Death could not sever my soul and you,
As these have severed your soul from me.

You have chosen and clung to the chance they sent you,
Life sweet as perfume and pure as prayer.
But will it not one day in heaven repent you?
Will they solace you wholly, the days that were?
Will you lift up your eyes between sadness and bliss,
Meet mine, and see where the great love is,
And tremble and turn and be changed? Content you;
The gate is strait; I shall not be there.

But you, had you chosen, had you stretched hand,
Had you seen good such a thing were done,
I too might have stood with the souls that stand
In the sun's sight, clothed with the light of the sun;
But who now on earth need care how I live?
Have the high gods anything left to give,
Save dust and laurels and gold and sand?
Which gifts are goodly; but I will none.

O all fair lovers about the world,
There is none of you, none, that shall comfort me.
My thoughts are as dead things, wrecked and whirled
Round and round in a gulf of the sea;
And still, through the sound and the straining stream,
Through the coil and chafe, they gleam in a dream,
The bright fine lips so cruelly curled,
And strange swift eyes where the soul sits free.

Free, without pity, withheld from woe,
Ignorant; fair as the eyes are fair.
Would I have you change now, change at a blow,
Startled and stricken, awake and aware?
Yea, if I could, would I have you see
My very love of you filling me,
And know my soul to the quick, as I know
The likeness and look of your throat and hair?

I shall not change you. Nay, though I might,
Would I change my sweet one love with a word?
I had rather your hair should change in a night,
Clear now as the plume of a black bright bird;

Your face fail suddenly, cease, turn grey,
Die as a leaf that dies in a day.
I will keep my soul in a place out of sight,
Far off, where the pulse of it is not heard.

Far off it walks, in a bleak blown space,
Full of the sound of the sorrow of years.
I have woven a veil for the weeping face,
Whose lips have drunken the wine of tears;
I have found a way for the failing feet,
A place for slumber and sorrow to meet;
There is no rumour about the place,
Nor light, nor any that sees or hears.

I have hidden my soul out of sight, and said
"Let none take pity upon thee, none
Comfort thy crying: for lo, thou art dead,
Lie still now, safe out of sight of the sun.
Have I not built thee a grave, and wrought
Thy grave-clothes on thee of grievous thought,
With soft spun verses and tears unshed,
And sweet light visions of things undone?"

"I have given thee garments and balm and myrrh,
And gold, and beautiful burial things.
But thou, be at peace now, make no stir;
Is not thy grave as a royal king's?
Fret not thyself though the end were sore;
Sleep, be patient, vex me no more.
Sleep; what hast thou to do with her?
The eyes that weep, with the mouth that sings?"

Where the dead red leaves of the years lie rotten,
The cold old crimes and the deeds thrown by,
The misconceived and the misbegotten,
I would find a sin to do ere I die,
Sure to dissolve and destroy me all through,
That would set you higher in heaven, serve you
And leave you happy, when clean forgotten,
As a dead man out of mind, am I.

Your lithe hands draw me, your face burns through me,
I am swift to follow you, keen to see ;
But love lacks might to redeem or undo me,
As I have been, I know I shall surely be ;
“ What should such fellows as I do ? ” Nay,
My part were worse if I chose to play ;
For the worst is this after all ; if they knew me,
Not a soul upon earth would pity me.

And I play not for pity of these ; but you,
If you saw with your soul what man am I,
You would praise me at least that my soul all through
Clove to you, loathing the lives that lie ;
The souls and lips that are bought and sold,
The smiles of silver and kisses of gold,
The lapdog loves that whine as they chew,
The little lovers that curse and cry.

There are fairer women, I hear ; that may be.
But I, that I love you and find you fair,
Who are more than fair in my eyes if they be,
Do the high gods know or the great gods care ?

Though the swords in my heart for one were seven,
Would the iron hollow of doubtful heaven,
That knows not itself whether night-time or day be,
Reverberate words and a foolish prayer?

I will go back to the great sweet mother,
Mother and lover of men, the sea.
I will go down to her, I and none other,
Close with her, kiss her and mix her with me;
Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast;
O fair white mother, in days long past
Born without sister, born without brother,
Set free my soul as thy soul is free.

O fair green-girdled mother of mine,
Sea, that art clothed with the sun and the rain,
Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,
Thy large embraces are keen like pain.
Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,
Those pure cold populous graves of thine,
Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,
Change as the winds change, veer in the tide;
My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,
I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside;
Sleep, and not know if she be, if she were,
Filled full with life to the eyes and hair,
As a rose is fulfilled to the roseleaf tips
With splendid summer and perfume and pride.

This woven raiment of nights and days,
Were it once cast off and unwound from me,
Naked and glad would I walk in thy ways,
Alive and aware of thy ways and thee;
Clear of the whole world, hidden at home,
Clothed with the green and crowned with the foam,
A pulse of the life of thy straits and bays,
A vein in the heart of the streams of the sea.

Fair mother, fed with the lives of men,
Thou art subtle and cruel of heart, men say
Thou hast taken, and shalt not render again;
Thou art full of thy dead, and cold as they.
But death is the worst that comes of thee;
Thou art fed with our dead, O mother, O sea,
But when hast thou fed on our hearts? or when,
Having given us love, hast thou taken away?

O tender-hearted, O perfect lover,
Thy lips are bitter, and sweet thine heart.
The hopes that hurt and the dreams that hover,
Shall they not vanish away and apart?
But thou, thou art sure, thou art older than earth;
Thou art strong for death and fruitful of birth;
Thy depths conceal and thy gulfs discover;
From the first thou wert; in the end thou art.

And grief shall endure not for ever, I know.
As things that are not shall these things be;
We shall live through seasons of sun and of snow,
And none be grievous as this to me.

We shall hear, as one in a trance that hears,
The sound of time, the rhyme of the years;
Wrecked hope and passionate pain will grow
As tender things of a spring-tide sea.

Sea-fruit that swings in the waves that hiss,
Drowned gold and purple and royal rings.
And all time past, was it all for this?

Times unforgotten, and treasures of things?
Swift years of liking and sweet long laughter,
That wist not well of the years thereafter
Till love woke, smitten at heart by a kiss,
With lips that trembled and trailing wings?

There lived a singer in France of old
By the tideless dolorous midland sea.
In a land of sand and ruin and gold

There shone one woman, and none but she.
And finding life for her love's sake fail,
Being fain to see her, he bade set sail,
Touched land, and saw her as life grew cold,
And praised God, seeing; and so died he.

Died, praising God for his gift and grace:

For she bowed down to him weeping, and said
"Live;" and her tears were shed on his face

Or ever the life in his face was shed.

The sharp tears fell through her hair, and stung
Once, and her close lips touched him and clung
Once, and grew one with his lips for a space;
And so drew back, and the man was dead.

O brother, the gods were good to you.

Sleep, and be glad while the world endures.

Be well content as the years wear through ;

Give thanks for life, and the loves and lures ;

Give thanks for life, O brother, and death,

For the sweet last sound of her feet, her breath,

For gifts she gave you, gracious and few,

Tears and kisses, that lady of yours.

Rest, and be glad of the gods ; but I,

How shall I praise them, or how take rest ?

There is not room under all the sky

For me that know not of worst or best,

Dream or desire of the days before,

Sweet things or bitterness, any more.

Love will not come to me now though I die,

As love came close to you, breast to breast.

I shall never be friends again with roses ;

I shall loathe sweet tunes, where a note grown strong

Relents and recoils, and climbs and closes,

As a wave of the sea turned back by song.

There are sounds where the soul's delight takes fire,

Face to face with its own desire ;

A delight that rebels, a desire that reposes ;

I shall hate sweet music my whole life long.

The pulse of war and passion of wonder,

The heavens that murmur, the sounds that shine,

The stars that sing and the loves that thunder,

The music burning at heart like wine,

An armed archangel whose hands raise up
All senses mixed in the spirit's cup
Till flesh and spirit are molten in sunder —
 These things are over, and no more mine.

These were a part of the playing I heard
 Once, ere my love and my heart were at strife;
Love that sings and hath wings as a bird,
 Balm of the wound and heft of the knife.
Fairer than earth is the sea, and sleep
Than overwatching of eyes that weep,
Now time has done with his one sweet word,
 The wine and leaven of lovely life.

I shall go my ways, tread out my measure,
 Fill the days of my daily breath
With fugitive things not good to treasure,
 Do as the world doth, say as it saith;
But if we had loved each other — O sweet,
Had you felt, lying under the palms of your feet,
The heart of my heart, beating harder with pleasure
 To feel you tread it to dust and death —

Ah, had I not taken my life up and given
 All that life gives and the years let go,
The wine and honey, the balm and leaven,
 The dreams reared high and the hopes brought low?
Come life, come death, not a word be said;
Should I lose you living, and vex you dead?
I never shall tell you on earth; and in heaven,
 If I cry to you then, will you hear or know?

HYMN TO PROSERPINE

(AFTER THE PROCLAMATION IN ROME OF
THE CHRISTIAN FAITH)

Vicisti, Galilæe

I HAVE lived long enough, having seen one
thing, that love hath an end ;
Goddess and maiden and queen, be near me
now and befriend.

Thou art more than the day or the morrow,
the seasons that laugh or that weep ;
For these give joy and sorrow ; but thou,
Proserpina, sleep.

Sweet is the treading of wine, and sweet the
feet of the dove ;

But a goodlier gift is thine than foam of the
grapes or love.

Yea, is not even Apollo, with hair and harp-
string of gold,

A bitter God to follow, a beautiful God to
behold ?

I am sick of singing : the bays burn deep
and chafe : I am fain

To rest a little from praise and grievous
pleasure and pain.

For the Gods we know not of, who give us
our daily breath,

We know they are cruel as love or life, and
lovely as death.

O Gods dethroned and deceased, cast forth,
wiped out in a day !

From your wrath is the world released, re-
deemed from your chains, men say.
New Gods are crowned in the city; their
flowers have broken your rods;
They are merciful, clothed with pity, the
young compassionate Gods.
But for me their new device is barren, the
days are bare;
Things long past over suffice, and men for-
gotten that were.
Time and the Gods are at strife; ye dwell
in the midst thereof,
Draining a little life from the barren breasts
of love.
I say to you, cease, take rest; yea, I say to
you all, be at peace,
Till the bitter milk of her breast and the bar-
ren bosom shall cease.
Wilt thou yet take all, Galilean? but these
thou shalt not take,
The laurel, the palms and the pæan, the
breast of the nymphs in the brake;
Breasts more soft than a dove's, that trem-
ble with tenderer breath;
And all the wings of the Loves, and all the
joy before death;
All the feet of the hours that sound as a
single lyre,
Dropped and deep in the flowers, with
strings that flicker like fire.
More than these wilt thou give, things fair-
er than all these things?

Nay, for a little we live, and life hath mutable wings.

A little while and we die; shall life not thrive as it may?

For no man under the sky lives twice, outliving his day.

And grief is a grievous thing, and a man hath enough of his tears:

Why should he labour, and bring fresh grief to blacken his years?

Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world has grown grey from thy breath;

We have drunken of things Lethean, and fed on the fulness of death.

Laurel is green for a season, and love is sweet for a day;

But love grows bitter with treason, and laurel outlives not May.

Sleep, shall we sleep after all? for the world is not sweet in the end;

For the old faiths loosen and fall, the new years ruin and rend.

Fate is a sea without shore, and the soul is a rock that abides;

But her ears are vexed with the roar and her face with the foam of the tides.

O lips that the live blood faints in, the leavings of racks and rods!

O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted Gods!

Though all men abase them before you in spirit, and all knees bend,

I kneel not neither adore you, but standing,
look to the end.
All delicate days and pleasant, all spirits
and sorrows are cast
Far out with the foam of the present that
sweeps to the surf of the past:
Where beyond the extreme sea-wall, and be-
tween the remote sea-gates,
Waste water washes, and tall ships founder,
and deep death waits:
Where, mighty with deepening sides, clad
about with the seas as with wings,
And impelled of invisible tides, and fulfilled
of unspeakable things,
White-eyed and poisonous-finned, shark-
toothed and serpentine-curved,
Rolls, under the whitening wind of the fu-
ture, the wave of the world.
The depths stand naked in sunder behind
it, the storms flee away;
In the hollow before it the thunder is taken
and snared as a prey;
In its sides is the north-wind bound; and its
salt is of all men's tears;
With light of ruin, and sound of changes,
and pulse of years:
With travail of day after day, and with trou-
ble of hour upon hour;
And bitter as blood is the spray; and the
crests are as fangs that devour:
And its vapour and storm of its steam as
the sighing of spirits to be;

And its noise as the noise in a dream ; and
its depth as the roots of the sea :
And the height of its heads as the height of
the utmost stars of the air :
And the ends of the earth at the might there-
of tremble, and time is made bare.
Will ye bridle the deep sea with reins, will
ye chasten the high sea with rods ?
Will ye take her to chain her with chains,
who is older than all ye Gods ?
All ye as a wind shall go by, as a fire shall
ye pass and be past ;
Ye are Gods, and behold, ye shall die, and
the waves be upon you at last.
In the darkness of time, in the deeps of the
years, in the changes of things,
Ye shall sleep as a slain man sleeps, and the
world shall forget you for kings.
Though the feet of thine high priests tread
where thy lords and our forefathers
trod,
Though these that were Gods are dead, and
thou being dead art a God,
Though before thee the throned Cytherean
be fallen, and hidden her head,
Yet thy kingdom shall pass, Galilean, thy
dead shall go down to thee dead.
Of the maiden thy mother men sing as a
goddess with grace clad around ;
Thou art throned where another was king ;
where another was queen she is
crowned.

Yea, once we had sight of another : but now
 she is queen, say these.
Not as thine, not as thine was our mother,
 a blossom of flowering seas,
Clothed round with the world's desire as
 with raiment, and fair as the foam,
And fleetier than kindled fire, and a goddess,
 and mother of Rome.
For thine came pale and a maiden, and sis-
 ter to sorrow ; but ours,
Her deep hair heavily laden with odour and
 colour of flowers,
White rose of the rose-white water, a silver
 splendour, a flame,
Bent down unto us that besought her, and
 earth grew sweet with her name.
For thine came weeping, a slave among
 slaves, and rejected ; but she
Came flushed from the full-flushed wave,
 and imperial, her foot on the sea.
And the wonderful waters knew her, the
 winds and the viewless ways,
And the roses grew rosier, and bluer the sea-
 blue stream of the bays.
Ye are fallen, our lords, by what token ? we
 wist that ye should not fall.
Ye were all so fair that are broken ; and one
 more fair than ye all.
But I turn to her still, having seen she shall
 surely abide in the end ;
Goddess and maiden and queen, be near me
 now and befriend.

O daughter of earth, of my mother, her
crown and blossom of birth,
I am also, I also, thy brother; I go as I
came unto earth.
In the night where thine eyes are as moons
are in heaven, the night where thou
art,
Where the silence is more than all tunes,
where sleep overflows from the
heart,
Where the poppies are sweet as the rose in
our world, and the red rose is white,
And the wind falls faint as it blows with the
fume of the flowers of the night,
And the murmur of spirits that sleep in the
shadow of Gods from afar
Grows dim in thine ears and deep as the
deep dim soul of a star,
In the sweet low light of thy face, under
heavens untrod by the sun,
Let my soul with their souls find place, and
forget what is done and undone.
Thou art more than the Gods who number
the days of our temporal breath;
For these give labour and slumber; but
thou, Proserpina, death.
Therefore now at thy feet I abide for a sea-
son in silence. I know
I shall die as my fathers died, and sleep as
they sleep; even so.
For the glass of the years is brittle wherein
we gaze for a span;

A little soul for a little bears up this corpse
which is man.¹

So long I endure, no longer; and laugh not
again, neither weep.

For there is no God found stronger than
death; and death is a sleep.

¹ ψυχάριον εἰ βαστάζον νεκρόν. — EPICTE-
TUS.

ILICET

THERE is an end of joy and sorrow ;
Peace all day long, all night, all morrow,
But never a time to laugh or weep.
The end is come of pleasant places,
The end of tender words and faces,
The end of all, the popped sleep.

No place for sound within their hearing,
No room to hope, no time for fearing,
No lips to laugh, no lids for tears.
The old years have run out all their measure ;
No chance of pain, no chance of pleasure,
No fragment of the broken years.

Outside of all the worlds and ages,
There where the fool is as the sage is,
There where the slayer is clean of blood,
No end, no passage, no beginning,
There where the sinner leaves off sinning,
There where the good man is not good.

There is not one thing with another,
But Evil saith to Good : My brother,
My brother, I am one with thee :
They shall not strive nor cry for ever :
No man shall choose between them : never
Shall this thing end and that thing be.

Wind wherein seas and stars are shaken
Shall shake them, and they shall not waken ;
 None that has lain down shall arise ;
The stones are sealed across their places ;
One shadow is shed on all their faces,
 One blindness cast on all their eyes.

Sleep, is it sleep perchance that covers
Each face, as each face were his lover's ?
 Farewell ; as men that sleep fare well.
The grave's mouth laughs unto derision
Desire and dread and dream and vision,
 Delight of heaven and sorrow of hell.

No soul shall tell nor lip shall number
The names and tribes of you that slumber ;
 No memory, no memorial.
"Thou knowest" — who shall say thou knowest ?
There is none highest and none lowest :
 An end, an end, an end of all.

Good night, good sleep, good rest from sorrow,
To these that shall not have good morrow ;
 The gods be gentle to all these.
Nay, if death be not, how shall they be ?
Nay, is there help in heaven ? it may be
 All things and lords of things shall cease.

The stooped urn, filling, dips and flashes ;
The bronzed brims are deep in ashes ;
 The pale old lips of death are fed.

Shall this dust gather flesh hereafter ?
Shall one shed tears or fall to laughter,
At sight of all these poor old dead ?

Nay, as thou wilt ; these know not of it ;
Thine eyes' strong weeping shall not profit,
Thy laughter shall not give thee ease ;
Cry aloud, spare not, cease not crying,
Sigh, till thou cleave thy sides with sighing,
Thou shalt not raise up one of these.

Burnt spices flash, and burnt wine hisses,
The breathing flame's mouth curls and kisses
The small dried rows of frankincense ;
All round the sad red blossoms smoulder,
Flowers coloured like the fire, but colder,
In sign of sweet things taken hence ;

Yea, for their sake and in death's favour
Things of sweet shape and of sweet savour
We yield them, spice and flower and wine ;
Yea, costlier things than wine or spices,
Whereof none knoweth how great the price is,
And fruit that comes not of the vine.

From boy's pierced throat and girl's pierced bosom
Drips, reddening round the blood-red blossom,
The slow delicious bright soft blood,
Bathing the spices and the pyre,
Bathing the flowers and fallen fire,
Bathing the blossom by the bud.

Roses whose lips the flame has deadened
Drink till the lapping leaves are reddened
And warm wet inner petals weep;
The flower whereof sick sleep gets leisure,
Barren of balm and purple pleasure,
Fumes with no native steam of sleep.

Why will ye weep? what do ye weeping?
For waking folk and people sleeping,
And sands that fill and sands that fall,
The days rose-red, the popped hours,
Blood, wine, and spice and fire and flowers,
There is one end of one and all.

Shall such an one lend love or borrow?
Shall these be sorry for thy sorrow?
Shall these give thanks for words or breath?
Their hate is as their loving-kindness;
The frontlet of their brows is blindness,
The armlet of their arms is death.

Lo, for no noise or light or thunder
Shall these grave-clothes be rent in sunder,
He that hath taken, shall he give?
He hath rent them: shall he bind together?
He hath bound them: shall he break the tether?
He hath slain them: shall he bid them live?

A little sorrow, a little pleasure,
Fate metes us from the dusty measure
That holds the date of all of us;

We are born with travail and strong crying,
And from the birth-day to the dying
The likeness of our life is thus.

One girds himself to serve another,
Whose father was the dust, whose mother
The little dead red worm therein ;
They find no fruit of things they cherish ;
The goodness of a man shall perish,
It shall be one thing with his sin.

In deep wet ways by grey old gardens
Fed with sharp spring the sweet fruit hardens ;
They know not what fruits wane or grow ;
Red summer burns to the utmost ember ;
They know not, neither can remember,
The old years and flowers they used to know.

Ah, for their sakes, so trapped and taken,
For theirs, forgotten and forsaken,
Watch, sleep not, gird thyself with prayer.
Nay, where the heart of wrath is broken,
Where long love ends as a thing spoken,
How shall thy crying enter there ?

Though the iron sides of the old world falter
The likeness of them shall not alter
For all the rumour of periods,
The stars and seasons that come after,
The tears of latter men, the laughter
Of the old unalterable gods.

Far up above the years and nations,
The high gods, clothed and crowned with patience,
Endure through days of death-like date;
They bear the witness of things hidden;
Before their eyes all life stands chidden,
As they before the eyes of Fate.

Not for their love shall Fate retire,
Nor they relent for our desire,
Nor the graves open for their call.
The end is more than joy and anguish,
Than lives that laugh and lives that languish,
The popped sleep, the end of all.

FAUSTINE

Ave Faustina Imperatrix, morituri te salutant

LEAN back, and get some minutes' peace;
Let your head lean
Back to the shoulder with its fleece
Of locks, Faustine.

The shapely silver shoulder stoops,
Weighed over clean
With state of splendid hair that droops
Each side, Faustine.

Let me go over your good gifts
That crown you queen;
A queen whose kingdom ebbs and shifts
Each week, Faustine.

Bright heavy brows well gathered up :
White gloss and sheen;
Carved lips that make my lips a cup
To drink, Faustine.

Wine and rank poison, milk and blood,
Being mixed therein
Since first the devil threw dice with God
For you, Faustine.

Your naked new-born soul, their stake,
Stood blind between;
God said "let him that wins her take
And keep Faustine."

But this time Satan throve, no doubt ;
Long since, I ween,
God's part in you was battered out ;
Long since, Faustine.

The die rang sideways as it fell,
Rang cracked and thin,
Like a man's laughter heard in hell
Far down, Faustine.

A shadow of laughter like a sigh,
Dead sorrow's kin ;
So rang, thrown down, the devil's die
That won Faustine.

A suckling of his breed you were,
One hard to wean ;
But God, who lost you, left you fair,
We see, Faustine.

You have the face that suits a woman
For her soul's screen —
The sort of beauty that's called human
In hell, Faustine.

You could do all things but be good
Or chaste of mien ;
And that you would not if you could,
We know, Faustine.

Even he who cast seven devils out
Of Magdalene
Could hardly do as much, I doubt,
For you, Faustine.

Did Satan make you to spite God?
Or did God mean
To scourge with scorpions for a rod
Our sins, Faustine?

I know what queen at first you were,
As though I had seen
Red gold and black imperious hair
Twice crown Faustine.

As if your fed sarcophagus
Spared flesh and skin,
You come back face to face with us,
The same Faustine.

She loved the games men played with death,
Where death must win;
As though the slain man's blood and breath
Revived Faustine.

Nets caught the pike, pikes tore the net;
Lithe limbs and lean
From drained-out pores dripped thick red sweat
To soothe Faustine.

She drank the steaming drift and dust
Blown off the scene;
Blood could not ease the bitter lust
That galled Faustine.

All round the foul fat furrows reeked,
Where blood sank in;
The circus splashed and seethed and shrieked
All round Faustine.

But these are gone now : years entomb
The dust and din ;
Yea, even the bath's fierce reek and fume
That slew Faustine.

Was life worth living then ? and now
Is life worth sin ?
Where are the imperial years ? and how
Are you, Faustine ?

Your soul forgot her joys, forgot
Her times of teen ;
Yea, this life likewise will you not
Forget, Faustine ?

For in the time we know not of
Did fate begin
Weaving the web of days that wove
Your doom, Faustine.

The threads were wet with wine, and all
Were smooth to spin ;
They wove you like a Bacchanal,
The first Faustine.

And Bacchus cast your mates and you
Wild grapes to glean ;
Your flower-like lips were dashed with dew
From his, Faustine.

Your drenched loose hands were stretched to hold
The vine's wet green,
Long ere they coined in Roman gold
Your face, Faustine.

Then after change of soaring feather
And winnowing fin,
You woke in weeks of feverish weather,
A new Faustine.

A star upon your birthday burned,
Whose fierce serene
Red pulseless planet never yearned
In heaven, Faustine.

Stray breaths of Sapphic song that blew
Through Mitylene
Shook the fierce quivering blood in you
By night, Faustine.

The shameless nameless love that makes
Hell's iron gin
Shut on you like a trap that breaks
The soul, Faustine.

And when your veins were void and dead,
What ghosts unclean
Swarmed round the straitened barren bed
That hid Faustine ?

What sterile growths of sexless root
Or epicene ?
What flower of kisses without fruit
Of love, Faustine ?

What adders came to shed their coats ?
What coiled obscene
Small serpents with soft stretching throats
Caressed Faustine ?

But the time came of famished hours,
Maimed loves and mean,
This ghastly thin-faced time of ours,
To spoil Faustine.

You seem a thing that hinges hold,
A love-machine
With clockwork joints of supple gold —
No more, Faustine.

Not godless, for you serve one God,
The Lampsacene,
Who metes the gardens with his rod;
Your lord, Faustine.

If one should love you with real love
(Such things have been,
Things your fair face knows nothing of,
It seems, Faustine) ;

That clear hair heavily bound back,
The lights wherein
Shift from dead blue to burnt-up black ;
Your throat, Faustine,

Strong, heavy, throwing out the face
And hard bright chin
And shameful scornful lips that grace
Their shame, Faustine,

Curled lips, long since half kissed away,
Still sweet and keen ;
You'd give him — poison shall we say ?
Or what, Faustine ?

HESPERIA

OUT of the golden remote wild west where
the sea without shore is,
Full of the sunset, and sad, if at all, with
the fulness of joy,
As a wind sets in with the autumn that blows
from the region of stories,
Blows with a perfume of songs and of
memories beloved from a boy,
Blows from the capes of the past oversea to
the bays of the present,
Filled as with shadow of sound with the
pulse of invisible feet,
Far out to the shallows and straits of the
future, by rough ways or pleasant,
Is it thither the wind's wings beat? is it
hither to me, O my sweet?
For thee, in the stream of the deep tide-wind
blowing in with the water,
Thee I behold as a bird borne in with the
wind from the west,
Straight from the sunset, across white waves
whence rose as a daughter
Venus thy mother, in years when the world
was a water at rest.
Out of the distance of dreams, as a dream
that abides after slumber,
Strayed from the fugitive flock of the
night, when the moon overhead
Wanes in the wan waste heights of the
heaven, and stars without number

Die without sound, and are spent like
lamps that are burnt by the dead,
Comes back to me, stays by me, lulls me
with touch of forgotten caresses,
One warm dream clad about with a fire as
of life that endures ;
The delight of thy face, and the sound of thy
feet, and the wind of thy tresses,
And all of a man that regrets, and all of a
maid that allures.
But thy bosom is warm for my face and pro-
found as a manifold flower,
Thy silence as music, thy voice as an
odour that fades in a flame ;
Not a dream, not a dream is the kiss of thy
mouth, and the bountiful hour
That makes me forget what was sin, and
would make me forget were it shame.
Thine eyes that are quiet, thine hands that
are tender, thy lips that are loving,
Comfort and cool me as dew in the dawn
of a moon like a dream ;
And my heart yearns baffled and blind,
moved vainly toward thee, and moving
As the reflux seaweed moves in the lan-
guid exuberant stream,
Fair as a rose is on earth, as a rose under
water in prison,
That stretches and swings to the slow
passionate pulse of the sea,
Closed up from the air and the sun, but
alive, as a ghost rearisen,

Pale as the love that revives as a ghost
 re arisen in me.
From the bountiful infinite west, from the
 happy memorial places
Full of the stately repose and the lordly
 delight of the dead,
Where the fortunate islands are lit with the
 light of ineffable faces,
And the sound of a sea without wind is
 about them, and sunset is red,
Come back to redeem and release me from
 love that recalls and represses,
That cleaves to my flesh as a flame, till
 the serpent has eaten his fill ;
From the bitter delights of the dark, and the
 feverish, the furtive caresses
That murder the youth in a man or ever
 his heart have its will.
Thy lips cannot laugh and thine eyes cannot
 weep ; thou art pale as a rose is,
Paler and sweeter than leaves that cover
 the blush of the bud ;
And the heart of the flower is compassion,
 and pity the core it encloses,
Pity, not love, that is born of the breath
 and decays with the blood.
As the cross that a wild nun clasps till the
 edge of it bruises her bosom,
So love wounds as we grasp it, and black-
 ens and burns as a flame ;
I have loved overmuch in my life ; when the
 live bud bursts with the blossom,

Bitter as ashes or tears is the fruit, and
the wine thereof shame.
As a heart that its anguish divides is the
green bud cloven asunder;
As the blood of a man self-slain is the
flush of the leaves that allure;
And the perfume as poison and wine to the
brain, a delight and a wonder;
And the thorns are too sharp for a boy,
too slight for a man, to endure.
Too soon did I love it, and lost love's rose;
and I cared not for glory's:
Only the blossoms of sleep and of pleasure
were mixed in my hair.
Was it myrtle or poppy thy garland was
woven with, O my Dolores?
Was it pallor of slumber, or blush as of
blood, that I found in thee fair?
For desire is a respite from love, and the
flesh not the heart is her fuel;
She was sweet to me once, who am fled
and escaped from the rage of her reign;
Who behold as of old time at hand as I turn,
with her mouth growing cruel,
And flushed as with wine with the blood
of her lovers, Our Lady of Pain.
Low down where the thicket is thicker with
thorns than with leaves in the summer,
In the brake is a gleaming of eyes and a
hissing of tongues that I knew;
And the lithe long throats of her snakes
reach round her, their mouths over-
come her,

And her lips grow cool with their foam,
made moist as a desert with
dew.
With the thirst and the hunger of lust though
her beautiful lips be so bitter,
With the cold foul foam of the snakes they
soften and redden and smile;
And her fierce mouth sweetens, her eyes wax
wide and her eyelashes glitter,
And she laughs with a savour of blood in
her face, and a savour of guile.
She laughs, and her hands reach hither, her
hair blows hither and hisses,
As a low-lit flame in a wind, back-blown
till it shudder and leap;
Let her lips not again lay hold on my soul,
nor her poisonous kisses,
To consume it alive and divide from thy
bosom, Our Lady of Sleep.
Ah daughter of sunset and slumber, if now it
return into prison,
Who shall redeem it anew? but we, if
thou wilt, let us fly;
Let us take to us, now that the white skies
thrill with a moon unarisen,
Swift horses of fear or of love, take flight
and depart and not die.
They are swifter than dreams, they are
stronger than death; there is none
that hath ridden,
None that shall ride in the dim strange
ways of his life as we ride;

By the meadows of memory, the highlands
of hope, and the shore that is hidden,
Where life breaks loud and unseen, a
sonorous invisible tide;
By the sands where sorrow has trodden, the
salt pools bitter and sterile,
By the thundering reef and the low sea-
wall and the channel of years,
Our wild steeds press on the night, strain
hard through pleasure and peril,
Labour and listen and pant not or pause
for the peril that nears;
And the sound of them trampling the way
cleaves night as an arrow asunder,
And slow by the sand-hill and swift by the
down with its glimpses of grass,
Sudden and steady the music, as eight hoofs
trample and thunder,
Rings in the ear of the low blind wind of
the night as we pass;
Shrill shrieks in our faces the blind bland air
that was mute as a maiden,
Stung into storm by the speed of our pas-
sage, and deaf where we past;
And our spirits too burn as we bound, thine
holy but mine heavy-laden,
As we burn with the fire of our flight; ah,
love, shall we win at the last?

CLEOPATRA

“ Her beauty might outface the jealous hours,
Turn shame to love and pain to a tender sleep,
And the strong nerve of hate to sloth and tears ;
Make spring rebellious in the sides of frost,
Thrust out lank winter with hot August growths,
Compel sweet blood into the husks of death,
And from strange beasts enforce harsh courtesy.”

T. HAYMAN, *Fall of Antony*, 1655.

I

HER mouth is fragrant as a vine,
A vine with birds in all its boughs ;
Serpent and scarab for a sign
Between the beauty of her brows
And the amorous deep lids divine.

II

Her great curled hair makes luminous
Her cheeks, her lifted throat and chin.
Shall she not have the hearts of us
To shatter, and the loves therein
To shed between her fingers thus ?

III

Small ruined broken strays of light,
Pearl after pearl she shreds them through
Her long sweet sleepy fingers, white
As any pearl's heart veined with blue,
And soft as dew on a soft night.

IV

As if the very eyes of love
 Shone through her shutting lids, and stole
 The slow looks of a snake or dove ;
 As if her lips absorbed the whole
 Of love, her soul the soul thereof.

V

Lost, all the lordly pearls that were
 Wrung from the sea's heart, from the green
 Coasts of the Indian gulf-river ;
 Lost, all the loves of the world — so keen
 Towards this queen for love of her.

VI

You see against her throat the small
 Sharp glittering shadows of them shake ;
 And through her hair the imperial
 Curled likeness of the river snake,
 Whose bite shall make an end of all.

VII

Through the scales sheathing him like wings,
 Through hieroglyphs of gold and gem,
 The strong sense of her beauty stings,
 Like a keen pulse of love in them,
 A running flame through all his rings.

VIII

Under those low large lids of hers
 She hath the histories of all times ;

The fruit of foliage-stricken years ;
The old seasons with their heavy chime
That leaves its rhyme in the world's ears.

IX

She sees the heart of death made bare,
The ravelled riddle of the skies,
The faces faded that were fair,
The mouths made speechless that were wise,
The hollow eyes and dusty hair ;

X

The shape and shadow of mystic things,
Things that fate fashions or forbids ;
The staff of time-forgotten kings
Whose name falls off the Pyramids,
Their coffin-lids and grave-clothings ;

XI

Dank dregs, the scum of pool or clod,
God-spawn of lizard-footed clans,
And those dog-headed hulks that trod
Swart necks of the old Egyptians,
Raw draughts of man's beginning God ;

XII

The poised hawk, quivering ere he smote,
With plume-like gems on breast and back ;
The asps and water-worms afloat
Between the rush-flowers moist and slack ;
The cat's warm black bright rising throat.

XIII

The purple days of drouth expand
 Like a scroll opened out again ;
 The molten heaven drier than sand,
 The hot red heaven without rain,
 Sheds iron pain on the empty land.

XIV

All Egypt aches in the sun's sight ;
 The lips of men are harsh for drouth,
 The fierce air leaves their cheeks burnt white,
 Charred by the bitter blowing south,
 Whose dusty mouth is sharp to bite.

XV

All this she dreams of, and her eyes
 Are wrought after the sense hereof.
 There is no heart in her for sighs ;
 The face of her is more than love —
 A name above the Ptolemies.

XVI

Her great grave beauty covers her
 As that sleek spoil beneath her feet
 Clothed once the anointed soothsayer ;
 The hallowing is gone forth from it
 Now, made unmeet for priests to wear.

XVII

She treads on gods and god-like things,
 On fate and fear and life and death,

On hate that cleaves and love that clings,
All that is brought forth of man's breath
And perisheth with what it brings.

XVIII

She holds her future close, her lips
Hold fast the face of things to be ;
Action, and sound of war that dips
Down the blown valleys of the sea,
Far sails that flee, and storms of ships ;

XIX

The laughing red sweet mouth of wine
At ending of life's festival ;
That spice of cerecloths, and the fine
White bitter dust funereal
Sprinkled on all things for a sign ;

XX

His face, who was and was not he,
In whom, alive, her life abode ;
The end, when she gained heart to see
Those ways of death wherein she trod,
Goddess by god, with Antony.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN

IN a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses
The steep square slope of the blossomless bed
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its
roses
Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,
To the low last edge of the long lone land.
If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?
So long have the grey bare walks lain guestless,
Through branches and briers if a man make way,
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's, restless
Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled
That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have rifled
Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time.
The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain.
The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,
These remain.

Not a flower to be prest of the foot that falls not;
As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;
From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls
not,

Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.
Over the meadows that blossom and wither
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song;
Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long.

The sun burns sere and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.
Only the wind here hovers and revels
In a round where life seems barren as death.
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look thither,"
Did he whisper? "Look forth from the flowers to
the sea;
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms
wither,
And men that love lightly may die — but we?"
And the same wind sang and the same waves whitened,
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened,
Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end — but what end who knows?

Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them ?
What love was ever as deep as a grave ?
They are loveless now as the grass above them
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again for ever ;
Here change may come not till all change end.
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never,
Who have left nought living to ravage and rend.
Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these shall be ;
Till a last wind's breath upon all these blowing
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise and the sheer cliff crumble,
Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble
The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead.

RELICS

THIS flower that smells of honey and the sea,
White laurustine, seems in my hand to be
A white star made of memory long ago
Lit in the heaven of dear times dead to me.

A star out of the skies love used to know
Here held in hand, a stray left yet to show
What flowers my heart was full of in the days
That are long since gone down dead memory's flow.

Dead memory that revives on doubtful ways,
Half hearkening what the buried season says
Out of the world of the unapparent dead
Where the lost Aprils are, and the lost Mays.

Flower, once I knew thy star-white brethren bred
Nigh where the last of all the land made head
Against the sea, a keen-faced promontory,
Flowers on salt wind and sprinkled sea-dews fed.

Their hearts were glad of the free place's glory;
The wind that sang them all his stormy story
Had talked all winter to the sleepless spray,
And as the sea's their hues were hard and hoary.

Like things born of the sea and the bright day,
They laughed out at the years that could not slay,
Live sons and joyous of unquiet hours,
And stronger than all storms that range for prey.

And in the close indomitable flowers
A keen-edged odour of the sun and showers
Was as the smell of the fresh honeycomb
Made sweet for mouths of none but paramours.

Out of the hard green wall of leaves that clomb
They showed like windfalls of the snow-soft foam,
Or feathers from the weary south-wind's wing,
Fair as the spray that it came shoreward from.

And thou, as white, what word hast thou to bring?
If my heart hearken, whereof wilt thou sing?
For some sign surely thou too hast to bear,
Some word far south was taught thee of the spring.

White like a white rose, not like these that were
Taught of the wind's mouth and the winter air,
Poor tender thing of soft Italian bloom,
Where once thou grewest, what else for me grew there

Born in what spring and on what city's tomb,
By whose hand wast thou reached, and plucked for whom?
There hangs about thee, could the soul's sense tell,
An odour as of love and of love's doom.

Of days more sweet than thou wast sweet to smell,
Of flower-soft thoughts that came to flower and fell,
Of loves that lived a lily's life and died,
Of dreams now dwelling where dead roses dwell.

O white birth of the golden mountain-side
That for the sun's love makes its bosom wide
At sunrise, and with all its woods and flowers
Takes in the morning to its heart of pride!

Thou hast a word of that one land of ours,
And of the fair town called of the fair towers,
A word for me of my San Gimignano,
A word of April's greenest-girdled hours.

Of the breached walls whereon the wallflowers ran
Called of Saint Fina, breachless now of man,
Though time with soft feet break them stone by stone,
Who breaks down hour by hour his own reign's span.

Of the cliff overcome and overgrown
That all that flowerage clothed as flesh clothes bone,
That garment of acacias made for May,
Whereof here lies one witness overblown.

The fair brave trees with all their flowers at play,
How king-like they stood up into the day!
How sweet the day was with them, and the night!
Such words of message have dead flowers to say.

This that the winter and the wind made bright,
And this that lived upon Italian light,
Before I throw them and these words away,
Who knows but I what memories too take flight?

EPICEDE

(JAMES LORIMER GRAHAM DIED AT FLORENCE,
APRIL 30, 1876)

LIFE may give for love to death
Little; what are life's gifts worth
To the dead wrapt round with earth?
Yet from lips of living breath
Sighs or words we are fain to give,
All that yet, while yet we live,
Life may give for love to death.

Dead so long before his day,
Passed out of the Italian sun
To the dark where all is done
Fallen upon the verge of May;
Here at life's and April's end
How should song salute my friend
Dead so long before his day? ✕

Not a kindlier life or sweeter
Time, that lights and quenches men,
Now may quench or light again,
Mingling with the mystic metre
Woven of all men's lives with his
Not a clearer note than this,
Not a kindlier life or sweeter.

In this heavenliest part of earth
He that living loved the light,
Light and song, may rest aright,

One in death, if strange in birth,
With the deathless dead that make
Life the lovelier for their sake
In this heavenliest part of earth.

Light, and song, and sleep at last —
Struggling hands and suppliant knees
Get no goodlier gift than these.
Song that holds remembrance fast,
Light that lightens death, attend
Round their graves who have to friend
Light, and song, and sleep at last.

A BALLAD OF DREAMLAND

I HID my heart in a nest of roses,
Out of the sun's way, hidden apart;
In a softer bed than the soft white snow's is,
Under the roses I hid my heart.
Why would it sleep not? why should it start,
When never a leaf of the rose-tree stirred?
What made sleep flutter his wings and part?
Only the song of a secret bird.

Lie still, I said, for the wind's wing closes,
And mild leaves muffle the keen sun's dart;
Lie still, for the wind on the warm sea dozes,
And the wind is unquieter yet than thou art.
Does a thought in thee still as a thorn's wound smart?
Does the fang still fret thee of hope deferred?
What bids the lids of thy sleep dispart?
Only the song of a secret bird.

The green land's name that a charm encloses,
It never was writ in the traveller's chart,
And sweet on its trees as the fruit that grows is,
It never was sold in the merchant's mart.
The swallows of dreams through its dim fields dart,
And sleep's are the tunes in its tree-tops heard;
No hound's note wakens the wildwood hart,
Only the song of a secret bird.

ENVOI

In the world of dreams I have chosen my part.
To sleep for a season and hear no word
Of true love's truth or of light love's art,
Only the song of a secret bird.

BEFORE SUNSET

I N the lower lands of day
On the hither side of night,
There is nothing that will stay,
There are all things soft to sight;
Lighted shade and shadowy light
In the wayside and the way,
Hours the sun has spared to smite,
Flowers the rain has left to play.

Shall these hours run down and say
No good thing of thee and me?
Time that made us and will slay
Laughs at love in me and thee;
But if here the flowers may see
One whole hour of amorous breath,
Time shall die, and love shall be
Lord as time was over death.

A VISION OF SPRING IN WINTER

I

O TENDER time that love thinks long to see,
Sweet foot of spring that with her footfall sows
Late snowlike flowery leavings of the snows,
Be not too long irresolute to be ;
O mother-month, where have they hidden thee ?
Out of the pale time of the flowerless rose
I reach my heart out toward the springtime lands.
I stretch my spirit forth to the fair hours,
The purplest of the prime ;
I lean my soul down over them, with hands
Made wide to take the ghostly growths of flowers ;
I send my love back to the lovely time.

II

Where has the greenwood hid thy gracious head ?
Veiled with what visions while the grey world grieves,
Or muffled with what shadows of green leaves,
What warm intangible green shadows spread
To sweeten the sweet twilight for thy bed ?
What sleep enchants thee ? what delight deceives ?
Where the deep dreamlike dew before the dawn
Feels not the fingers of the sunlight yet
Its silver web unweave,
Thy footless ghost on some unfooted lawn
Whose air the unrisen sunbeams fear to fret
Lives a ghost's life of daylong dawn and eve.

III

Sunrise it sees not, neither set of star,
 Large nightfall, nor imperial plenilune,
 Nor strong sweet shape of the full-breasted noon;
 But where the silver-sandalled shadows are,
 Too soft for arrows of the sun to mar,
 Moves with the mild gait of an ungrown moon:
 Hard overhead the half-lit crescent swims,
 The tender-coloured night draws hardly breath,
 The light is listening;
 They watch the dawn of slender-shapen limbs,
 Virginal, born again of doubtful death,
 Chill foster-father of the weanling spring.

IV

As sweet desire of day before the day,
 As dreams of love before the true love born,
 From the outer edge of winter overworn
 The ghost arisen of May before the May
 Takes through dim air her unawakened way,
 The gracious ghost of morning risen ere morn.
 With little unblown breasts and child-eyed looks
 Following, the very maid, the girl-child spring,
 Lifts windward her bright brows,
 Dips her light feet in warm and moving brooks,
 And kindles with her own mouth's colouring
 The fearful firstlings of the plumeless boughs.

V

I seek thee sleeping, and awhile I see,
 Fair face that art not, how thy maiden breath
 Shall put at last the deadly days to death

And fill the fields and fire the woods with thee
And seaward hollows where my feet would be
 When heaven shall hear the word that April saith
To change the cold heart of the weary time,
 To stir and soften all the time to tears,
 Tears joyfuller than mirth;
As even to May's clear height the young days climb
 With feet not swifter than those fair first years
 Whose flowers revive not with thy flowers on earth.

VI

I would not bid thee, though I might, give back
 One good thing youth has given and borne away;
 I crave not any comfort of the day
That is not, nor on time's retrodden track
Would turn to meet the white-robed hours or black
 That long since left me on their mortal way;
Nor light nor love that has been, nor the breath
 That comes with morning from the sun to be
 And sets light hope on fire;
No fruit, no flower thought once too fair for death,
 No flower nor hour once fallen from life's green tree,
 No leaf once plucked or once fulfilled desire.

VII

The morning song beneath the stars that fled
 With twilight through the moonless mountain air,
 While youth with burning lips and wreathless hair
Sang toward the sun that was to crown his head,
Rising; the hopes that triumphed and fell dead,
 The sweet swift eyes and songs of hours that were;

These may'st thou not give back for ever ; these,
As at the sea's heart all her wrecks lie waste,
Lie deeper than the sea ;
But flowers thou may'st, and winds, and hours of ease,
And all its April to the world thou may'st
Give back, and half my April back to me.

PASTICHE

Now the days are all gone over
Of our singing, love by lover,
Days of summer-coloured seas
Blown adrift through beam and breeze.

Now the nights are all past over
Of our dreaming, dreams that hover
In a mist of fair false things,
Nights afloat on wide wan wings.

Now the loves with faith for mother,
Now the fears with hope for brother,
Scarce are with us as strange words,
Notes from songs of last year's birds.

Now all good that comes or goes is
As the smell of last year's roses,
As the radiance in our eyes
Shot from summer's ere he dies.

Now the morning faintlier risen
Seems no God come forth of prison,
But a bird of plume-plucked wing,
Pale with thoughts of evening.

Now hath hope, outraced in running,
Given the torch up of his cunning
And the palm he thought to wear
Even to his own strong child — despair.

SONG

LOVE laid his sleepless head
On a thorny rosy bed ;
And his eyes with tears were red,
And pale his lips as the dead.

And fear and sorrow and scorn
Kept watch by his head forlorn,
Till the night was overworn
And the world was merry with morn.

And Joy came up with the day
And kissed Love's lips as he lay,
And the watchers ghostly and grey
Sped from his pillow away.

And his eyes as the dawn grew bright,
And his lips waxed ruddy as light :
Sorrow may reign for a night,
But day shall bring back delight.

A LYKE-WAKE SONG

F^{AIR} of face, full of pride,
Sit ye down by a dead man's side.

Ye sang songs a' the day:
Sit down at night in the red worm's way.

Proud ye were a' day long:
Ye'll be but lean at evensong.

Ye had gowd kells on your hair:
Nae man kens what ye were.

Ye set scorn by the silken stuff:
Now the grave is clean enough.

Ye set scorn by the rubis ring:
Now the worm is a saft sweet thing.

Fine gold and blithe fair face,
Ye are come to a grimly place.

Gold hair and glad grey een,
Nae man kens if ye have been.

ADIEUX À MARIE STUART

I

QUEEN, for whose house my fathers fought,
With hopes that rose and fell,
Red star of boyhood's fiery thought,
Farewell.

They gave their lives, and I, my queen,
Have given you of my life,
Seeing your brave star burn high between
Men's strife.

The strife that lightened round their spears
Long since fell still: so long
Hardly may hope to last in years
My song.

But still through strife of time and thought
Your light on me too fell:
Queen, in whose name we sang or fought,
Farewell.

II

There beats no heart on either border
Wherethrough the north blasts blow
But keeps your memory as a warder
His beacon-fire aglow.

Long since it fired with love and wonder
 Mine, for whose April age
Blithe midsummer made banquet under
 The shade of Hermitage.

Soft sang the burn's blithe notes, that gather
 Strength to ring true :
And air and trees and sun and heather
 Remembered you.

Old border ghosts of fight or fairy
 Or love or teen,
These they forgot, remembering Mary
 The Queen.

III

Queen once of Scots and ever of ours
 Whose sires brought forth for you
Their lives to strew your way like flowers,
 Adieu.

Dead is full many a dead man's name
 Who died for you this long
Time past : shall this too fare the same,
 My song ?

But surely, though it die or live,
 Your face was worth
All that a man may think to give
 On earth.

No darkness cast of years between
Can darken you :
Man's love will never bid my queen
Adieu.

IV

Love hangs like light about your name
As music round the shell :
No heart can take of you a tame
Farewell.

Yet, when your very face was seen,
Ill gifts were yours for giving :
Love gat strange guerdons of my queen
When living.

O diamond heart unflawed and clear,
The whole world's crowning jewel !
Was ever heart so deadly dear
So cruel ?

Yet none for you of all that bled
Grudged once one drop that fell :
Not one to life reluctant said
Farewell.

V

Strange love they have given you, love disloyal,
Who mock with praise your name,
To leave a head so rare and royal
Too low for praise or blame.

You could not love nor hate, they tell us,
 You had nor sense nor sting :
In God's name, then, what plague befell us
 To fight for such a thing ?

"Some faults the gods will give," to fetter
 Man's highest intent :
But surely you were something better
 Than innocent !

No maid that strays with steps unwary
 Through snares unseen,
But one to live and die for ; Mary,
 The Queen.

VI

Forgive them all their praise, who blot
 Your fame with praise of you :
Then love may say, and falter not,
 Adieu.

Yet some you hardly would forgive
 Who did you much less wrong
Once : but resentment should not live
 Too long.

They never saw your lip's bright bow,
 Your swordbright eyes,
The bluest of heavenly things below
 The skies.

Clear eyes that love's self finds most like
A swordblade's blue,
A swordblade's ever keen to strike,
Adieu.

VII

Though all things breathe or sound of fight
That yet make up your spell,
To bid you were to bid the light
Farewell.

Farewell the song says only, being
A star whose race is run:
Farewell the soul says never, seeing
The sun.

Yet, wellnigh as with flash of tears,
The song must say but so
That took your praise up twenty years
Ago.

More bright than stars or moons that vary,
Sun kindling heaven and hell,
Here, after all these years, Queen Mary,
Farewell.

THREE SONGS FROM THE TRILOGY OF MARY STUART

I

MARY BEATON'S SONG

(FROM *CHASTELARD*, ACT I, SCENE II)

I

BETWEEN the sunset and the sea
My love laid hands and lips on me ;
Of sweet came sour, of day came night,
Of long desire came brief delight :
Ah love, and what thing came of thee
Between the sea-downs and the sea ?

II

Between the sea-mark and the sea
Joy grew to grief, grief grew to me ;
Love turned to tears, and tears to fire,
And dead delight to new desire ;
Love's talk, love's touch there seemed to be
Between the sea-sand and the sea.

III

Between the sundown and the sea
Love watched one hour of love with me ;
Then down the all-golden water-ways
His feet flew after yesterdays ;
I saw them come and saw them flee
Between the sea-foam and the sea.

Between the sea-strand and the sea
 Love fell on sleep, sleep fell on me ;
 The first star saw twain turn to one
 Between the moonrise and the sun ;
 The next, that saw not love, saw me
 Between the sea-banks and the sea.

II

RIZZIO'S SONG

(FROM *BOTHWELL*, ACT I, SCENE V)

L ORD Love went Maying
Where Time was playing,
In light hands weighing
Light hearts with sad;
Crowned king with peasant,
Pale past with present,
Harsh hours with pleasant,
Good hopes with bad;
Nor dreamed how fleeter
Than Time's swift metre,
O'er all things sweeter
How clothed with power,
The murderess maiden
Mistrust walks laden
With red fruit ruined and dead white flower.

How close behind him
Ere man's faith find him,
How strong to bind him
With fears for bands,
Lest once beholden
Of man the golden
God's face embolden
All hearts and hands;
For if doubt were not,
Whose sore shafts spare not,

Large life would care not
For death's poor hour,
Seeing all life's season
By love's sweet reason
Made wise would seem in his eyes a flower.

By Love's side flying
As Time went crying
Glad news and lying
In all men's ears,
With blind feet gliding
She came deriding
Their joyous tiding
That ends in tears;
From Time's side failing
As Love sank quailing,
Her strong wings sailing
Made all heads cower,
Her wings untethered,
With fleet thoughts feathered,
Made weak the summer and bleak the flower.

Hope found no cover
Wherein to hover,
And Love no lover,
And Joy no place;
Till when Time creeping
Had left him sleeping,
Love knelt down weeping
Before her face,
And prayed, soul-stricken,
One flower might quicken,

Though spring should sicken
And storm devour;
She from her bosom
Flung one sere blossom,
Then passed him dead on the last dead flower.

SONG OF MARY STUART

(FROM *MARY STUART*, ACT I, SCENE II)

AND ye maun braid your yellow hair
And busk ye like a bride ;
Wi' sevenscore men to bring ye hame,
And ae true love beside ;
Between the birk and the green rowan
Fu' blithely shall ye ride.

O ye maun braid my yellow hair,
But braid it like nae bride ;
And I maun gang my ways, mither,
Wi' nae true love beside ;
Between the kirk and the kirkyard
Fu' sadly shall I ride.

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